

## Message Text

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72

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 IO-13 NEA-10 EB-11 AID-20

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15 RSR-01 /167 W

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R 031655Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1285

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY KIGALI

AMEMBASSY FORT LAMY

AMEMBASSY BANGUI

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE YAOUNDE 2683

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CM

SUBJECT: AHIDJO EXPLAINS CAMEROON'S WITHDRAWAL FROM OCAM

REF: YAOUNDE 2320

1. SUMMARY. IN CAREFULLY CONSTRUCTED "INTERVIEW" WITH  
OFFICIAL CAMEROON NEWS AGENCY, PRESIDENT AHIDJO HAS SET  
FORTH RATIONALE OF CAMEROON'S WITHDRAWAL FROM OCAM,  
WHICH HE HAD ANNOUNCED JULY 1 IN DAKAR. HE REASONED

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THAT OCAM HAD SERVED ITS PURPOSE AS A TRANSITIONAL GROUPING OF

COUNTRIES WITH SHARED EXPERIENCE. BUT PASSAGE OF TIME HAD MADE IT AN ANACHRONISM AND POTENTIALLY DIVISIVE FORCE IN AFRICA. OAU, AIDED BY REALISTIC AND PRACTICAL REGIONAL GROUPINGS SUCH AS UDEAC, WAS NOW ABLE TO ADVANCE SHARED INTERESTS OF ALL AFRICAN COUNTRIES IN LIBERATION FROM COLONIALISM AND UNDER-DEVELOPMENT. EXPLAINED THAT DECISION TO WITHDRAW FROM OCAM NOT RPT NOT PROMPTED BY ANY PARTICULAR EVENT, NOR DOES IT IN ANY WAY IMPLY CHANGED BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH COUNTRIES WHICH REMAIN OCAM MEMBERS. END SUMMARY.

2. CAMEROON NEW AGENCY (ACAP) ON AUGUST 2 PUBLISHED "INTERVIEW" WITH PRESIDENT AHIDJO ON CAMEROON'S WITHDRAWAL FROM OCAM AND POSITION RE FUTURE COOPERATION WITH EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (LATTER SUBJECT REPORTED SEPTEL). "INTERVIEW OBVIOUSLY CAREFULLY PREPARED WRITTEN EXPOSITION OF POLICY.

3. AHIDJO REFUTED INTERVIEWER'S SUGGESTION THAT HE HAD BEEN DISENCHANTED WITH OCAM SINCE SHORTLY AFTER ORGANIZATION'S CREATION IN 1965. EXPLAINED RATHER THAT OCAM, STRUCTURED ON BASIS OF HISTORICAL, SENTIMENTAL AND CULTURAL TIES, WAS USEFUL TRANSITIONAL GROUPING TO PAVE WAY FOR CONTINENTAL UNITY. OCAM HAD TO SOME EXTENT FULFILLED ITS MISSION, BUT PASSAGE OF TIME HAD NOW ERODED ITS BONDS, AND HARD REASONING CALLED FOR DIFFERENT ORIENTATION TODAY. PRESENT REALITIES CALLED FOR AFRICAN UNITY TO ACHIEVE TOTAL LIBERATION OF CONTINENT FROM COLONIAL YOKE IN ALL FORMS AND FROM UNDER-DEVELOPMENT. OCAM HAD BECOME ANACHRONISM, A POTENTIALLY DIVISIVE FORCE, NOW THAT OAU HAD REACHED POINT WHERE IT COULD TAKE CHARGE OF ALL ACTIVITY TOWARD TOTAL LIBERATION OF AFRICA, STRUGGLE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND AFFIRMATION OF AFRICA IN WIDER WORLD.

4. AHIDJO STRESSED THAT OAU NOW IN POSITION TO ACCOMPLISH ITS TASKS WITH AID OF NATURAL REGIONAL GROUPINGS SUCH AS UDEAC, LCBC, ENTENTE, EAC, SENEGAL RIVER ORGANIZATION, NASCENT CEAO, ETC. CAMEROON ENCOURAGES SUCH REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL GROUPINGS WHICH ENLARGE ECONOMIC AREA. ORGANIZE REGIONAL PLANNING AND SHARING OF INTEGRATED INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY, COORDINATE INFRASTRUCTURE, AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NATURAL AFFINITIES.

5. AHIDJO MADE POINT THAT DECISION TO WITHDRAW FROM OCAM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NOT RPT NOT PROMPTED BY ANY PARTICULAR EVENT, BUT RATHER PRODUCT OF MATURE REFLECTION. (NOTE: FROM VARIOUS COMMENTS IT CLEAR THAT CAMEROON RESPECTING OCAM PROVISION THAT WITHDRAWAL DOES NOT TAKE EFFECT UNTIL ONE YEAR AFTER DECLARATION MADE.) IN REPLY TO QUESTION IMPLYING CRITICISM THAT THIS DECISION ANNOUNCED AT DAKAR RATHER THAN AT HOME TO CAMEROON MEDIA, AHIDJO EXPLAINED DESIRE TO INFORM SENGHOR FIRST AND ANNOUNCE IT IMMEDIATELY AT DAKAR TO ELIMINATE ANY

CHANCE OF ERRONEOUS SUPPOSITIONS OR INTERPRETATIONS. STRESSED THAT, AT LEAST AS FAR AS CAMEROON CONCERNED, RELATIONS WITH INDIVIDUAL MEMBER COUNTRIES OF OCAM REMAIN UNCHANGED. CITED AS EXAMPLE TALKS DURING DAKAR VISIT ABOUT STRENGTHENING BILATERAL COOPERATION WITH SENEGAL AND UPCOMING DISCUSSIONS WHICH WILL LIKELY LEAD TO COMMERCIAL AGREEMENT. CITED ALSO ACTIVE COOPERATION IN CENTRAL AFRICAN SUB-REGION THROUGH UDEAC AND CENTRAL BANK (BEAC).

6. COMMENT: FOLLOWING AHIDJO'S SURPRISE WITHDRAWAL ANNOUNCEMENT IN DAKAR JULY 1, CAMEROON MEDIA PLAYED UP FOR NEXT TEN DAYS MESSAGES OF SUPPORT "FLOODING IN" FROM CAMEROON NATIONAL UNION PARTY UNITS, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, ETC. SUPPORTIVE MESSAGES FROM TWO FOREIGN CHIEFS OF STATE - SEKOU TOURE AND GENERAL AMIN -- WERE ALSO PUBLICIZED. THEREAFTER SILENCE PREVAILED UNTIL THIS DEFINITIVE "INTERVIEW." THE SOMEWHAT CONTENTIOUS TONE OF THE QUESTION ABOUT WHY THE DECISION WAS ANNOUNCED FROM DAKAR AND THROUGH FOREIGN PRESS REFLECTS CERTAIN DEGREE IRRITATION OVER IGNORING OF CAMEROON MEDIA AND PERHAPS LOCAL UNEASE AS WELL ABOUT TIGHTLY CONTROLLED DECISION MAKING. WORDING OF AHIDJO'S DAKAR ANNOUNCEMENT (I.E., DECISION TAKEN BY VIRTUE OF PRESIDENT'S CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS AND HE "SURE" PARTY, PEOPLE AND PARLIAMENT APPROVE) IMPLIED VERY PERSONAL AND PRIVATE DECISION. CONSIDERING AHIDJO'S REFLECTIVE DECISION-MAKING HABITS, IT LIKELY HE HAD BENEFIT OF STAFFWORK BY VERY SMALL NUMBER OF COMPETENT ADVISERS WHO MAY WELL NOT HAVE KNOWN OF ACTUAL DECISION OR TIMING. IN ANY CASE, SUBSTANCE OF DECISION IS EASY ONE FOR VIRTUALLY ALL CAMEROONIANS TO SUPPORT AND IS ESPECIALLY WELCOME TO ANGLOPHONES AND THE MORE NATIONALISTIC AND PROGRESSIVE AMONG FRANCOPHONES.  
MOORE

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